

Public Document Pack

**Democratic Services Section
Legal and Civic Services Department
Belfast City Council
City Hall
Belfast
BT1 5GS**

20 June 2024

MEETING OF STRATEGIC Policy and Resources Committee

Dear Alderman/Councillor,

In addition to those matters previously notified to you, the following item will also be considered at the meeting to be held at 9.30 am on Friday, 21st June, 2024.

Yours faithfully,

John Walsh

Chief Executive

AGENDA:

8. Equality and Good Relations

- (b) Consultation on Equality Impact Assessment of Department for Communities Budget Allocation (Pages 1 - 6)

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Subject:	Consultation on Equality Impact Assessment of Department for Communities Budget Allocation
Date:	21 st June 2024
Reporting Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services
Contact Officer:	Nora Largey, City Solicitor and Director of Legal and Civic Services Trevor Wallace, Director of Finance

Restricted Reports													
Is this report restricted?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>												
<p>Please indicate the description, as listed in Schedule 6, of the exempt information by virtue of which the council has deemed this report restricted.</p> <p>Insert number <input style="width: 30px; height: 20px;" type="text"/></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Information relating to any individual 2. Information likely to reveal the identity of an individual 3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the council holding that information) 4. Information in connection with any labour relations matter 5. Information in relation to which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained 6. Information showing that the council proposes to (a) to give a notice imposing restrictions on a person; or (b) to make an order or direction 7. Information on any action in relation to the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime 													
<p>If Yes, when will the report become unrestricted?</p> <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 70%;">After Committee Decision</td> <td style="width: 5%;"></td> <td style="width: 25%; text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>After Council Decision</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sometime in the future</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Never</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> </tr> </table>		After Committee Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	After Council Decision		<input type="checkbox"/>	Sometime in the future		<input type="checkbox"/>	Never		<input type="checkbox"/>
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Call-in	
Is the decision eligible for Call-in?	Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

1.0	Purpose of Report/Summary of Main Issues
1.1	To update members in relation to an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on the Department for Communities initial Budget 2024-25 allocations.
2.0	Recommendations
2.1	The Committee is asked to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Note the contents of the report; and • Note that a draft response will be brought to August Committee.
3.0	Main report
3.1	The Executive's NI Budget 2024-25 allocations result in the Department facing a significant shortfall in both Resource DEL (£115.8m / 17%) and Capital (£167.3m / 48.5%) against bids submitted for 2024-25.
3.2	DfC officials have written to the Council to advise that an Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on the Department's initial Budget 2024-25 allocations will launch on 11 June 2024 and run until 3 September 2024. The EQIA asks for views on the allocation of funds for the financial year 2024 to 2025.
3.3	Details of the allocation can be found at the following link: Minister to launch budget consultation Department for Communities (communities-ni.gov.uk) The main funding issues for Council are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Rates Support Grant initial Budget is set at £3.1m for 2024-25, reflecting a reduction of £1.8m on 2023-24, and • Labour Market Partnership funding to Councils will continue in 2024-25, aligned with business case approvals.
3.4	Responses will inform the Minister's final allocation of funds for 2024-25, including any necessary mitigations. Responses will also be used to consider further in-year mitigations, budget reallocations or to direct any additional funding that may emerge over the course of the financial year.
3.5	Committee is asked to note that a corporate response will be brought to August Committee for approval.
	<u>Financial & Resource Implications</u>
3.6	There are financial implications for Council due to the reduction in the Rates Support Grant.

3.7	<p><u>Equality or Good Relations Implications / Rural Needs Assessment</u></p> <p>This will be considered as part of the Council’s draft corporate response to be presented to Committee in August.</p>
4.0	Appendices – Documents Attached
	Appendix 1 – Copy Letter from DfC

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Department for
Communities
www.communities-ni.gov.uk

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Department for
Commonities

From: Anthony Carleton
Director of Local Government &
Housing Regulation Division

Local Government and Housing
Regulation Division
Causeway Exchange
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Belfast
BT2 7EG

Telephone: (028) 9082 3346
e-mail: anthony.carleton@communities-ni.gov.uk
Our ref:
Date: 05 June 2024

Dear Chief Executive

MINISTER'S INITIAL BUDGET ALLOCATIONS FOR 2024-25

Communities Minister Gordon Lyons has today announced the Department's initial Budget 2024-25 allocations. An Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) consultation on the Department's initial Budget 2024-25 allocations will launch on 11 June 2024.

The consultation will be published on the Department's internet site and run until 3 September 2024. The EQIA asks for views on the allocation of funds for the financial year 2024 to 2025.

2024-25 Financial Challenge

The Executive's NI Budget 2024-25 allocations result in the Department facing a significant shortfall in both Resource DEL (£115.8m / 17%) and Capital (£167.3m / 48.5%) against bids submitted for 2024-25. The allocations are further compounded by recent high levels of inflation, adding to the cost of delivering public services, and increased demand for public services.

Difficult decisions have been considered by Minister to shield core public services as far as possible, while living within his Budget for 2024-25. A summary of the Minister's initial Budget 2024-25 decisions is available on the Department's [internet](#) site.



For Councils, this means –

- The Rates Support Grant initial Budget is set at £3.1m for 2024-25, reflecting a reduction of £1.8m on 2023-24, and
- Labour Market Partnership funding to Councils will continue in 2024-25, aligned with business case approvals.

The Minister welcomes comment on any aspects of his initial Budget 2024-25 decisions. Your Council is encouraged to make responses to the Budget 2024-25 EQIA at the earliest opportunity. Responses received will be used to inform the Minister's final allocation of funds for 2024-25, including any necessary mitigations. Responses will also be used to consider further in-year mitigations, budget reallocations or to direct any additional funding that may emerge over the course of the financial year.

If you have any concerns, please liaise with Jeff Glass who will be is available to discuss jeff.glass@communities-ni.gov.uk, telephone: 9082 3375.

Yours sincerely,

ANTHONY CARLETON

cc Deirdre Ward